

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Minimum wage workers, veterans and workers with special needs to benefit from innovative \$18.6 million state jobs initiative

SACRAMENTO - The California Labor and Workforce Development Agency is committing \$18.6 million to fund innovative programs that move minimum wage workers, veterans, people with disabilities, and other workers with special needs into high-wage jobs in growing industries where workers are in short supply.

"Everyone wins when we put the workers where the jobs are," Victoria Bradshaw, California Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, said. "That is exactly what we are doing with this \$18.6 million in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding: matching Californians in need of a job with California industries in need of workers. We are reaching out with one hand to workers who face the greatest obstacles to employment and with the other hand to businesses most in need of skilled workers."

The agency is beginning the process by asking private companies, public agencies and nonprofit organizations to submit proposals for innovative ways of helping new workers enter the job market and retraining experienced workers for the jobs of the future.

One of the Solicitations for Proposals (SFP) sets aside \$13.6 million in three categories:

- High-skill, high wage jobs in fast-growing industries.
- Jobs in industries with the greatest need for workers: health care, logistics and infrastructure development.
- Helping workers who have a hard time finding a job: workers who have been consistently employed in a minimum wage job for three years or more, and workers with special needs, including people with disabilities, youths, welfare recipients, and people with workplace literacy problems.

The deadline for submitting a proposal for this funding is October 23, 2006.

A second SFP, for \$5 million, focuses on developing employment and training services for veterans. It targets veterans with service-connected disabilities, those who have left the military in the last four years and those who have had problems finding and keeping jobs. The deadline for submitting a proposal for this funding is October 16, 2006.

Both SFPs are open to public, private non-profit and private for-profit organizations. Copies of the SFPs, as well as related information, are available in electronic form at www.edd.ca.gov/wiarep/wiaspind.htm

If you have any questions regarding this bulletin please contact Polly Forehand at (916) 654-8697 or Lynora Sisk at (916) 654-7854.

The WIA grant process is administered by the state Employment Development Department.